

I am fighting hard for this increase, because I know quality child care is worth every penny. I could not have done it without Senator HARKIN as the Labor-HHS Chairman. And rest assured, we will keep fighting for this child care program. So you see, we put money in a program through appropriations channels and now we are improving the program through authorizing channels.

I would like to thank my partner in crime, Senator RICHARD BURR, who was Ranking Member of Children and Families when I was Chair of that Subcommittee. Senator BURR's unwavering commitment to reauthorizing this program and ensuring safety of children is unrivaled, unparalleled, and unmatched. It has been a pleasure working with Senator BURR and his staff, Chris Toppings. They deserve a lot of credit for getting us here today.

I would also like to extend a sincere thanks to Chairman HARKIN and Ranking Member ALEXANDER, as well as former Ranking Member ENZI, and all of their staffs. Senators HARKIN, ALEXANDER, and ENZI have been involved in drafting the bill from the outset. They have worked to make sure that the bill remained a priority for the HELP Committee. The expertise of their staffs has been invaluable throughout this process. I want to thank Senator HARKIN's staff, Mario Cardona and Mildred Otero, and Senator ALEXANDER's staff, Peter Oppenheim and Patrick Murray. I would also like to thank our House colleagues, Representatives KLINE and MILLER, for making this bill a priority and for getting it done.

Every working parent with children, no matter their income level, worries about child care. What's affordable? What's accessible? Will my child be safe? Where can I get the best care for my kid? The CCDBG program has given many families over many years peace of mind, but we can and should be doing more to improve child care for children, parents, and providers alike. It is long past time to revitalize, refresh, and reform this vitally important program. It is my hope that we can move swiftly to pass this bill and send it to the President's desk. It has been 18 years in the making. Let's not wait any longer.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, November 9, 1989, was the day the Berlin Wall came down, a day we can all be proud. It is a day that reminds us of the power of democratic values and ideals.

I am filled with happiness as I remember that wonderful day 25 years ago. I am a proud American, there is no other country blessed with such opportunity, but the roots of my heritage lie in Poland. I grew up in a home that kept the heritage of the old country alive. As a child of World War II, Europe has always been fundamental to my life.

Together with my family I watched Poland fall, along with Hungary and the Czech Republic and others, behind the Iron Curtain. I remember when Poland was sold out at Yalta and Potsdam because of an ill-conceived agreement. These countries became captive nations.

We watched as a wall was built in Berlin. Those in East Berlin found themselves behind not only the Iron Curtain but the Berlin Wall as well, cut off from family, friends, and their livelihoods.

I am proud that Americans stood up at this moment—the famous Berlin Airlift provided those in West Berlin during the Berlin Blockade. The United States, with our allies, delivered basic necessities, food, and fuel. We all stood with President Kennedy as he declared “Ich bin ein Berliner.” American leadership was instrumental in making small cracks in the wall. As Madeline Albright, whose heritage is also rooted in Eastern Europe like my own, has said of the United States, “We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future.”

The wall began to crumble when an obscure Polish electrician named Lech Walesa jumped over a wall in a shipyard in Gdansk. It began with the Solidarity movement. From this, a people's revolution was sparked in Central Europe.

And thanks to the nonviolent protestors, the dissidents, such as Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia, and the political leadership from President Reagan and Maggie Thatcher and members of Congress the Wall came down.

I stand here to commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall, bringing down the Iron Curtain. Twenty five years ago, as a citizen of a strong democratic United States of America, I joined President Reagan when he said, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.” I take this opportunity to stand together with my countrymen and celebrate our democratic values, our respect for human rights, and our freedom. The United States is a great nation, and through our action, commitment, and resolve, we will continue to bring down walls of oppression.

This is a great occasion for all of us and for the world and deserves our remembrance.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL THOMAS A. BLAIR

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is my honor to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Marine Cpl Thomas A. Blair of Wagoner, OK who lost his life on March 24, 2003, from injuries sustained during a lengthy battle with insurgents while serving his Nation in Nasiriyah, Iraq.

The son of Alfred Jr. and Nancy Hinton Blair, Tommy was born July 7, 1978, in Wagoner, OK. After graduating from Broken Arrow High School, he entered the Marine Corps in 1997 and was assigned to the 2nd Low Altitude Air

Defense Battalion, Marine Air Control Group-28, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, Cherry Point, NC.

Tommy was posthumously awarded the Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal for helping pull nine wounded marines into an armored vehicle before it was hit by at least four enemy rocket-propelled grenades and then a missile fired from an American attack plane. He was among 18 marines killed that day in fighting around Nasiriyah.

Tommy was laid to rest in Ozark Memorial Park Cemetery in Joplin, MO, and is survived by his father Alfred Jr., mother Nancy, and brother Alfred III.

“He was a young man that would give the shirt off his back if someone needed it,” recalled his older brother, Marine SSG Alfred Blair, III. “He lived life to the fullest and enjoyed every minute of every day. In his first letter home to our mom, he said he was doing what he had been trained to do and was proud to be doing it for his country.”

Today we remember Marine CPL Thomas A. Blair, the first known native Oklahoman to lose his life in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a young man who loved his family and country and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

CAPTAIN JOHN J. BORIA

Mr. President, I also pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Air Force Capt. John J. Boria of Broken Arrow, OK, who died on September 6, 2004, after injuries sustained in a all-terrain vehicle accident while serving his nation in Doha, Qatar.

Javy, as he was known by his family and friends was born on August 12, 1975. After graduating from Union High School in Tulsa, OK, in 1993, I nominated this bright young man to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy. He spent a year at the Academy's Prep School before entering the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he graduated in 1998. Upon completing flight training, he was assigned as an instructor and KC-135 pilot at the 911th Refueling Squadron at Grand Forks Air Force Base, ND, and was deployed to Qatar to work in the Combined Air Operations Center in June 2004.

Funeral services were held on September 14, 2004, at Broken Arrow Assembly of God Church, with interment at the U.S. Air Force Academy Cemetery in Colorado Springs, CO. Javy is survived by his parents John and Wanda and brother Joe.

His favorite Bible verse in John 15 states, depending on the translation, that “no greater love has a man than he lay down his life for his friends,” his mother said. When discussing becoming an organ donor with his mother during his junior year at the Academy, Javy said, “I want to be a donor too. If I die and part of me could be used, it could give somebody else a chance to live the life that I won't have.”

Today we remember Air Force Capt. John J. Boria, a young man who loved his family and country and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER TRAVIS W. GROGAN

Mr. President, I now pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Army CWO Travis W. Grogan, who died on November 27, 2004, after the aircraft he was a passenger in crashed in Bamian, Afghanistan.

Born an only child on January 12, 1973, Travis grew up just outside Oklahoma City, OK, and graduated from Moore High School. Descending from a long line of servicemen, with relatives who served in Korea, World War I, and the Civil War, he initially enlisted in the Navy, where he served for 9 years as a search-and-rescue swimmer. Later, he became interested in flying and transferred to the Army to become a helicopter pilot with the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, Light, Schofield Barracks, HI. He had been in Afghanistan since April 2004.

"He died for our freedoms here in America," Barbara Grogan said of her only son. "This was important to him, and it should be important to everyone in America. Our freedoms are worth fighting for."

Travis is survived by his wife Tracy; daughter Ashley; son Austin; parents, Barbara and Lewis; and grandmother, Wilma North.

Funeral services were held on December 9, 2004, at the First Baptist Church in Moore, OK, with burial conducted at Ft Sill National Cemetery in Elgin, OK.

"He knew why he was in Afghanistan. He was very proud of being able to serve his country," said his grandmother. "If they had found him wounded, he would have said, Doctor me up; I'm going back'."

Today we remember Army CWO Travis W. Grogan, a young man who loved his family and country and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SPECIALIST JARED D. HARTLEY

Mr. President, it is my honor also to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Army SPC Jared D. Hartley, of Newkirk, OK, who died on July 15, 2005, of injuries sustained after an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Taji, Iraq.

Jared was born January 2, 1983, and enlisted in June 2002. After basic training he was assigned to 125th Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, based at Fort Riley, KS.

Jared was a 2002 graduate of Newkirk High School, where he played football and basketball. He joined the Army shortly after graduating high school and deployed for a 13-month tour in Iraq. "When he came back, he was going to get out of the military, but they told him they needed him," his brother Alex Hartley said. "He said, 'No problem, I'll stay in as long as you need me'." He returned for his second tour in March.

Alex said his brother was committed to the military's mission in Iraq and pleased with the positive response he received from the Iraqi people. "He

said people he talked to were glad they were there. Protecting our country and helping people—he felt good about his mission."

Jared was buried at Newkirk Cemetery and is survived by his parents, Doug and Kathie, and his brother Alex.

Today we remember Army SPC Jared D. Hartley, a young man who loved his family and country and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL DANIEL E. HOLLAND

Mr. President, I wish to remember the life and sacrifice of Army LTC Daniel E. Holland, of San Antonio, TX, who died on May 8, 2006, of injuries sustained when his vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device while he served his Nation in Baghdad, Iraq. Daniel was a veterinarian assigned to South Plains District Veterinary Command at Ft Hood, TX, attached to the 352nd Civil Affairs Command at Fort Bragg, NC.

Daniel was born in Munich, Germany, on April 5, 1963, the youngest of 10 children. His father retired from military service in Marlow, OK, where Daniel graduated from high school in 1981. Selected to give the commencement address at his high school graduation, he went on to attend Oklahoma State University on an ROTC scholarship, transferring after 3 years into OSU's College of Veterinary Medicine. His dreams were realized when he was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army in 1984. He and Sheryl Patton were married in August 1985 in Stillwater, OK.

Burial services with full military honors were held at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery on May 31, 2006.

Daniel is survived by his wife Sheryl; son Garrett; daughter Rachel; parents, Col (Ret.) and Mrs. Herbert S. Holland, Jr.; parents-in-law, Bancker and Lana Cade; brothers and sisters (and their spouses), Col (Ret.) Robert F. Holland (Carol), Mark M. Holland (Josie), Patricia Nixon (Thomas), David W. Holland (MaryAnn), Mary K. Ralya (Steven), Maj (Ret.) John R. Holland (Rita), Claire Nieswiadomy (Michael), Catherine Ochoa (Joseph), and Elizabeth Blute (Peter); sister-in-law, Kellie Robinson; and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Today we remember Army LTC Daniel E. Holland, a man who loved his family and country and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DANIEL R. PARKER

Mr. President, it is my honor also to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Army PFC Daniel R. Parker, who died on August 12, 2003 from injuries sustained when he was thrown from his vehicle after the driver swerved to avoid an oncoming vehicle while serving his Nation in Mosul, Iraq.

Dan was born August 17, 1984, in Oklahoma City and later moved to Lake Elsinore, CA. An active member of ROTC in high school in Lake Elsinore, CA, he followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, enlisting in the Army at the age of 17,

just 2 weeks after graduating from Lake Elsinore High School. His first assignment after completing training at Ft Sill, OK was B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault, Fort Campbell, KY.

Deploying for the first time in March 2003, Dan was part of the team sent to the villa where two sons of Saddam Hussein were hiding on July 23, 2003. After the gunfight that killed Odai and Qusai Hussein, Dan's photo was taken by media and he was on the cover of the Los Angeles Times standing in front of the building, holding his gun.

Dan was laid to rest in Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, CA, and is survived by his parents, Billy and Sherri Parker; three brothers, Dustin, Dalton, and Dallas; and a sister, Danielle.

Just before Dan deployed, his father drove to Nashville, TN, to spend time with him. "We drove around Nashville, went out to Opryland, drove down Music Row. I told him no one has a guarantee on the number of years you got. We don't know what the number is, but the important thing is every day you do what you're supposed to do," said his father.

"Not one time, ever, did I think that he wasn't going to walk through that door back home, but that's OK. I'm not disappointed in the 20 or 30 or 40 or 50 years that he didn't have. I'm excited about the 18 he did have. He was able to touch so many people's lives," Billy Parker said.

Today we remember Army PFC Daniel R. Parker, a young man who loved his family and country and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JOSHUA F. POWERS

Mr. President, I wish to remember the life and sacrifice of Army PFC Joshua F. Powers, of Skiatook, OK who died on February 24, 2006, of noncombat related injuries while serving his nation in Baghdad, Iraq.

As the youngest of three boys, Joshua was born February 11, 1985 and enlisted in July 2005. After basic training he was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY. He had been in Iraq for just over two weeks.

Josh was buried at Osage Garden Cemetery, Skiatook, OK where Army personnel honored him with a 21-gun salute and played "Taps". He is survived by his mother Patricia; father Ernest; and brothers Michael and Jonathan.

At the funeral service, an elder at Sperry's Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, C.H. Whiteman, said Joshua was doing what he thought was right. "If it weren't for young men like him, we couldn't enjoy the kind of life we have in America," he said.

Today we remember Army PFC Joshua F. Powers, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SPECIALIST BRYAN L. QUINTON

Mr. President, I also wish to remember the life and sacrifice of Army SPC Bryan L. Quinton, of Sand Springs, OK, who died on May 4, 2006, of injuries sustained when a rocket propelled grenade struck near his vehicle while he served his nation in Baghdad, Iraq.

Born June 29, 1981 to Timothy and Kristi Quinton in Tulsa, OK, Bryan enlisted in the United States Army on January 15, 2004 and completed basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. He served in Alpha Company, 2nd Engineer Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Giant, Korea before being reassigned to Bravo Company, 5th Engineer Battalion, Ft Leonard Wood, MO.

On the day he died, Bryan, like he had done so many times before, insisted on being in the "point"—the lead vehicle in a 12-vehicle convoy checking for bombs. "Let me make it safe for everyone else," he was quoted as saying. No one would travel those highways until he and his comrades gave the "all-clear signal," said BG Todd Semonite, commander of the engineer school at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. Everyone looked to him for their own personal safety.

Funeral services were held on May 17, 2006 at First United Methodist Church in Sapulpa, OK. The road leading into the Green Hill Memorial Gardens Cemetery was bordered on both sides by scores of American flags, snapping in the breeze. Nearly 100 motorcyclists, many of them veterans from previous wars, stood at attention along the flag-lined road as the funeral procession glided past them. As eight Army pallbearers pulled the silver-colored casket from the hearse, a bagpiper in the distance softly played "Amazing Grace." His wife Cyndi was given the folded flag that draped the coffin as her husband was honored by a 21-gun salute and the playing of taps.

Bryan is survived by his wife Cyndi; daughter Pyper; son Connor; parents Tim and Kristy Quinton; brother Garth; brother Brent and his wife Alison; nephew Clay Quinton; grandmother Barbara Weaver; and grandfather Grady Quinton.

"My heart died when my husband did, but I know he would want us to think about all the crazy stunts he pulled and all the laughter," Cyndi said. "God, you are very lucky to have him! Heaven, just get ready to laugh!"

Today we remember Army SPC Bryan L. Quinton, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SPECIALIST STEPHEN M. SCOTT

Mr. President, it is my honor to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Army SPC Stephen M. Scott of Lawton, OK, who died on August 23, 2003 from non-combat injuries sustained while serving his nation near Fallujah, Iraq.

Born in San Antonio, Stephen moved several times before settling in Lawton, OK. He met his wife Marie in

a psychology class before graduating from Eisenhower High School in Lawton and the couple married on July 4, 2002.

Stephen joined the Oklahoma National Guard in 2001 and he and Marie chose to go on active duty a year later. Stephen was a cook assigned to 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and Marie worked community relations for the 14th Public Affairs Detachment in Fort Carson, CO. He deployed to Iraq in June 2002. While she was aware of the risk involved in her husband's deployment, Marie never thought her office would be handling a news release announcing his death.

"Especially not Stephen," she said. "He was amazing. I'm so sad, but sometimes I can't help but smile. He was so goofy he would make you laugh. He was very spiritual. He was very strong. We had a lot of plans."

Today we remember Army SPC Stephen M. Scott, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SERGEANT DANTON K. SEITSINGER

Mr. President, it is my honor also to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Army SGT Danton K. Seitsinger of Oklahoma City, OK, who died on January 29, 2004 when a weapons cache detonated west of Ghanzi, Afghanistan.

Kyle was born on October 4, 1974 and graduated from Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, MO, in May 1993. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on December 7, 1993 and spent his 6 years guarding U.S. embassies in Brasilia, Moscow and the consulate in Rio de Janeiro. After separating from the Marine Corps in 2000, he attended Oklahoma Christian University and enlisted with the 486th Civil Affairs Battalion, Army Reserve, Broken Arrow, OK.

While at Oklahoma Christian University, Kyle worked for the student newspaper, serving as an editor for 2 years. In 2002, he was selected as one of 16 student journalists to participate in the Summer Institute in Journalism sponsored by the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities. His assignments included interviews with the Colombian president as well as U.S. Representatives Ernest Istook and J.C. Watts. In 2003, Kyle spent 6 months in Costa Rica in a program designed to immerse the learner in the Spanish language. While serving in Brasilia, he "adopted" two young poor girls and urged his family to send them gifts. He wasted no time, rising early to explore the many cities he visited. It is as though he knew he needed a faster pace to complete his life.

Just 12 months short of his graduation with a dual major in journalism and Spanish, Kyle was called to active duty in November 2003 and deployed to Afghanistan.

Kyle is survived by his father Dan; mother Jo; and two sisters, Karla Seitsinger and Penny Owen Cockerell. He is buried in Headrick Cemetery in Headrick, OK.

Today we remember Army SGT Danton K. Seitsinger, a young man who

loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

STAFF SERGEANT STEVEN W. WHITE

Mr. President, I wish to remember the life and sacrifice of Army SSG Steven W. White of Lawton, OK who died on August 13, 2003 from injuries sustained when his M113 armored personnel carrier hit an anti-tank mine while he served his nation in Tikrit, Iraq.

Steven was born November 6, 1973 and graduated from Fruitvale High School in Fruitvale, TX. A 9 year Army veteran, he re-enlisted in February 2003 for 6 more years and had been in Iraq for about 4 months. He was a truck mechanic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, based at Fort Hood, TX.

Steven was laid to rest in Haven of Memories Cemetery in Canton, TX. He is survived by his wife Laniece and four children ranging in age from 12 years to 16 months.

"He would always want to come home and visit with classmates and see his family," said his wife. "He was a simple man. It didn't take much to please him."

Today we remember Army SSG Steven W. White, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

LANCE CORPORAL HATAK KEYU YEARBY

Mr. President, I also remember the life and sacrifice of Marine Corps LCPL Hatak Keyu Yearby, of Overbrook, OK who died on May 14, 2006, of injuries sustained from an improvised explosive device while serving his nation in Al Anbar province of Iraq. Hatak was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, HI.

Hatak was born on March 11, 1985 in Overbrook, OK and graduated from Marietta High School in 2003 where he was remembered as a quiet, well-mannered young man who was a good student and person. A proud native American, he grew up attending powwows, where he performed and competed as a traditional Choctaw dancer. Good at his craft, he earned second place at the Trail of Tears Powwow in September 2003 and second-place at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Intertribal Powwow in October 2004. Wearing two long braids much of his life, he woke one morning and told his mother he had to cut his hair because of a dream. He then joined the Marines in May 2005, married Lindsey Michelle in February 2006 and went to Iraq the following month.

About 1,000 people attended a funeral service meant to celebrate the life of the 21-year-old newlywed. Burial services were conducted at the Yearby Family Cemetery in Overbrook, OK.

Hatak is survived by his wife Lindsey; his parents, Justin and Mary Yearby; and two sisters, Shema Yearby and Samarra Bell.

Today we remember Marine Corps LCPL Hatak Keyu Yearby, a young

man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

USS "PONCHATOULA"

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a naval vessel and crew that served with distinction during an important chapter of U.S. military history.

The Navy's modernization program of the 1950s included construction of a new class of fleet tankers that combined speed and an enlarged capacity to deliver fuel to the fleet. One of the vessels ordered in this modernization effort was named the USS *Ponchatoula*, AO-148. The vessel was laid down in Camden, NJ on March 1, 1954. The new fleet tanker displaced 38,000 tons when fully loaded greatly exceeding the capacity of tankers used during World War II. The ship had a complement of 324 officers and men. Although the USS *Ponchatoula* was a support vessel rather than a combat warship, she was armed with two 5-inch guns and twelve 3-inch antiaircraft guns.

The launching of the USS *Ponchatoula* into the waters of the Delaware River took place on July 9, 1954, at Camden, and she subsequently sailed across the river to Philadelphia, where the vessel was commissioned on January 12, 1956.

Assigned to the Pacific Fleet, USS *Ponchatoula* made the long voyage to the west coast. Following her arrival at Long Beach, CA, on March 10, 1956, the oiler conducted her shakedown cruise off the California coast.

In the fall of 1956, USS *Ponchatoula* was ordered to the western Pacific, her home waters for most of her active career. While en-route to Sasebo, Japan, to join Seventh Fleet as a unit of Service Squadron Three, she assisted a disabled Panamanian merchant ship that had been battered by two typhoons.

USS *Ponchatoula* accompanied the Seventh Fleet in early 1958 as the Navy sailed into harm's way in the Formosa Strait off the coast of the People's Republic of China, PRC. PRC forces were threatening to occupy several small islands off the coast of China, notably Quemoy and Matsu. President Eisenhower ordered the Navy to the area to symbolize American determination and support Taiwanese forces holding those small islands. President Eisenhower's tough stand and the presence of the Seventh Fleet off shore forced the PRC to back down.

In late April and early May of 1962, USS *Ponchatoula* replenished ships in the task force that participated in the atmospheric nuclear test Operation Dominic near Christmas Island.

In September 1962, the oiler sailed to Midway Island to supply ships involved in the recovery of CDR Wally Schirra's Project Mercury Space Capsule *Sigma 8* and in May 1963 supported the recovery of the then-Major Gordon Cooper's Mercury Space Capsule *Faith 7*. USS *Ponchatoula* also supported recovery

operations for *Gemini 4*, 6, and 7 in 1965 and *Apollo 7* in 1968.

When hostilities began to escalate in Vietnam during the summer and fall of 1964, USS *Ponchatoula* was deployed to the South China Sea to support fleet operations off the coast of Vietnam. She refueled numerous warships in those waters during the 1964 and 1965 bombing campaign against targets in North Vietnam.

In the summer of 1969 and into 1970 the USS *Ponchatoula* returned to Pearl Harbor and served the fleet in Hawaiian waters.

During the 1970s USS *Ponchatoula*'s area of operations expanded into the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, reflecting growing U.S. Navy activity in that part of the globe. In September 1980 the ship was transferred to the Military Sealift Command, becoming USNS *Ponchatoula*, T-AO-148 and beginning operation with a mainly civilian crew. Based at Subic Bay for most of the next decade, she continued her underway replenishment work, helping maintain the Navy's mobility and striking power in an often troubled region. USNS *Ponchatoula* was inactivated in February 1992 and laid up at Suisun Bay, CA. Though stricken from the Naval Vessel Register at the end of August 1992, she remained in Navy custody until transferred to the Maritime Administration for disposal in May 1999.

During the 43 years between her commissioning in 1956 and her transfer to the reserve fleet in 1999, the USS *Ponchatoula* rendered meritorious service to her country, helping to stop aggression in the Taiwan Strait, assisting the space program and supporting U.S. forces in Vietnam. She and the thousands of Navy sailors who served aboard her over the decades deserve the accolades of a grateful nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

PIERMONT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I wish to honor the town of Piermont, NH, which is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its founding this year. I am delighted to recognize this very special milestone.

Piermont, a town in Grafton County, lies in the shadow of Piermont Mountain and is bordered by the Connecticut River and the magnificent White Mountain National Forest.

The town of Piermont has a unique history. It was chartered on November 6, 1764, by colonial Governor Benning Wentworth, and the town derives its name from the "Piemonte" region of Italy, which in Italian means "at the foot of the mountain." Piermont's location in the Connecticut River Valley played an important role in the development of its proud agricultural heritage.

Piermont is home to Lake Tarleton, named after Colonel William Tarleton,

who served as a delegate to the 1791 Constitutional Convention. Two well-known summer camps are located on the lake—Camp Walt Whitman and Kingswood Camp for Boys. Each year, campers come to Piermont to enjoy the great outdoors and have some good old-fashioned summer fun.

Throughout the town's history, Piermont residents have been well known for their commitment to serve our great Nation. One distinguished Piermont resident, Ira Hobart Evans, a Civil War hero, was awarded the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military honor.

As the town marks its 250th anniversary this year, Piermont citizens are demonstrating their pride and community spirit with many special events in celebrating this historic occasion—including a parade in August that brought together residents, businesses, and community organizations. I am pleased to join all Granite Staters in congratulating Piermont citizens on reaching this milestone and in thanking them for their contributions to the State of New Hampshire. Congratulations, Piermont.●

RECOGNIZING SUNSHINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a school that is celebrating its 150th year of service to students in Springfield, MO. Sunshine Elementary School began serving young people during the Civil War. The wooden one-room country school house was originally located at what is now the major intersection of Campbell Road and Sunshine Lane. During the Civil War, students often witnessed the movement of troops along the road known at the time as the Old Wire Road. Later, the adjacent Sunshine Drive took its name from the school.

According to "So That All May Learn," a history of the Springfield Public School system published in 1995, Sunshine Elementary School was annexed into the Springfield School District in the mid-1920s, and the one-room school was relocated and replaced with a larger structure at its current location. The original school site, close to what is now the headquarters of Bass Pro Shops, was sold by the district in 1930.

In the boom years following World War II, student growth surged with the start of the baby boomer generation. In the late 1940s, student enrollment at Sunshine Elementary School grew by 430 kids in a single year, creating an overcrowding issue. The solution involved moving students in grades five and six to the nearby Phelps School. The first major addition to the Sunshine School came in 1950 when six new classrooms were built, along with a multipurpose room. Forty years later, new restrooms, two classrooms, and a library were added. More recently, Sunshine Elementary School became the last traditional school building equipped with air conditioning.